

Gender mainstreaming as a key strategy for promoting equality was adopted as an international policy in the Fourth World Conference at Beijing, 1995. Many studies show that in the decade following Beijing, a great deal of energy and resources were put into gender mainstreaming implementation. Despite the tremendous progress in policy development and abundance of information available on gender mainstreaming, reviews and evaluations show a huge gap between policy commitments at Beijing and actual implementation. The purpose of the study was to establish the contextual factors affecting gender mainstreaming implementation in the public sector. A descriptive survey research *26th Postgraduate Seminar Abstracts, June, 2013*.

A design was used in the study. The target population consisted of the provincial and district gender coordinators and the heads of public secondary schools in Eastern province. Eastern province was selected purposively among other provinces in Kenya because of low transition rate from primary to secondary schools. A total of 211 respondents were sampled through purposive and random sampling techniques. A questionnaire and an interview schedule were used to collect primary data. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the properties of the mass data that were collected from the respondents. Factor analysis was used to determine the factors that were used in the study namely; strength of strategies, gender mainstreaming strategies, gender policy in education, gender disparities in education and understanding of the policy which were used in logistic regression analysis. Logistic regression was used to determine the effect of the factors on gender mainstreaming. Among the five factors, only one factor (gender disparities in education) affected gender mainstreaming negatively. All other predictor variables: strength of strategies; gender mainstreaming strategies; gender policy in education and understanding of gender policy in education affected gender mainstreaming positively. From the findings, it is evident that gender policy in education is not being implemented effectively in the public secondary schools and there are several external and internal factors affecting gender mainstreaming in the education sector which includes; inadequate commitment from top-down to the institution, lack of understanding of the gender concept, inadequate training and awareness for teachers, gender imbalance and inadequate training for Board of Governors and Parents Teachers Association, inadequate resources and socio-cultural factors. The study concluded that the school heads, teachers and management were ill-prepared for the policy implementation, there is inadequate support, training and awareness, poor system of monitoring and evaluation, and that the policies and strategies outlined for secondary schools are appropriate and satisfactory but requires balancing between boys and girls.